

Northwest Power and Conservation Council  
Regional Coordination Forum  
Boise, Idaho  
May 15, 2017

DRAFT MEETING NOTES

ATTENDEES in person		On phone
Jennifer Anders Council-MT Guy Norman Council-WA Tony Grover Council Lynn Palensky Council Mark Fritsch Council Patty O'Toole Council Laura Robinson Council Steve Crow Council Jeff Allen Council-ID Kerry Berg Council-MT Karl Weist Council-OR Bryan Mercier BPA Scott Donahue BPA Dan Rawding WDFW Paul Kline IDFG	Matt Boyer MDFWP Tucker Jones ODFW Tom Iverson YNF, CRITFC Bob Austin USRT Scott Hauser USRT Greer Maier UCSRFB Mitch Silvers Senator Crapo's Office Rep Trout Unlimited	Nancy Leonard Council Erik Merrill Council Stacy Horton Council-WA Greg Sieglitz NOAA Lawrence Schawbe CTGR Brent Nichols Spokane Tribe BJ Kieffer Spokane Tribe Keith Kutchins UCUT Emmit Taylor NPT Jen Graham CTWSRO Sue Ireland KTI Laura Gephart CRITFC Amy Puls PNAMP Chris Wheaton PSMFC/StreamNet Marcy Foster BPA

**Introduction:**

Welcome by Jennifer Anders, Council; introductions by participants

**Agenda Item 1: Update on Moth-balled Captive Brood Facility at Bonneville Hatchery**

Bryan Mercier (BPA)

A BPA funded ODFW hatchery facility was originally built at Bonneville Dam around 1995 for the Catherine Creek/Lostine chinook captive brood stock. The captive brood program was discontinued and the facility has been mothballed for three years. The facility now requires a new \$300,000 roof and other maintenance, although the infrastructure (tanks and pumps) are in good condition. BPA is considering either putting the facility in surplus and transferring facilities maintenance responsibility to COE or decommissioning the facility. The facility is on COE-owned/managed land. BPA has 12 new hatchery facilities under development and/or construction across the basin and do not believe this facility will be needed in the future. BPA is asking for thoughts on how the program might repurpose the facility. If repurposed, investing in

a new roof makes more sense. Replacement of the facility once it is decommissioned would be about \$5M.

Comments:

- Some managers felt that it may be pre-mature to decommission the facility in case the ocean takes a turn for the worst.
- With all the current large scale planning (CSRO EIS, 2018/21 BIOP, USvOR, etc.) is decommissioning premature?
- BPA would like to hear from anyone that believes this facility may be needed in the future, by the next RCF meeting in September.<sup>1</sup>

## **Agenda Item 2: Project Reviews**

Lynn Palensky (Council)

Lynn provided an update on the status of current and planned project reviews:

Umbrella Habitat Projects - Council staff will submit implementation recommendations for the six umbrella habitat projects to the F&W committee this week. The recommendations are based on a performance evaluation and ISRP review. These projects will be reviewed again during the next larger geographic review process.

Wildlife Projects – The wildlife project review is underway and Council staff just received the preliminary ISRP report for 29 projects. The process includes a response loop and responses have been requested for about half of the projects. The final ISRP report is due by the end of June with funding recommendations to the F&W Committee in September.

Research Projects – Council staff expects to finalize the draft research plan by August. Once the research Plan is finalized, Council expects to initiate review of the research projects shortly thereafter in late 2017. It is likely that there will be science/policy workshops prior to soliciting research proposals.

Category reviews – The Council will consider launching a larger review similar to the 2010 RME category review that would include research, sturgeon, lamprey, and systemwide RME projects. Council staff are discussing how to best roll out the next set of reviews and are looking for input from the regional coordinators.

Staff outlined a list of assumptions they have going in to the next set of reviews including:

- Highly likely that there will be no new program money
- ISRP continues to review every project
- Research projects will have clearly defined end dates
- BOG will continue for project modifications emergencies

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<sup>1</sup> A post meeting suggestion asks the regional coordinators, Council and BPA to consider using the facility for rearing adult salmon and steelhead for the purposes of tribal 'put and take' cultural fisheries.

- ISRP reviews will be tailored based on project type
- Build from past reviews/investments
- Allow room for strategic adjustments in projects
- Allow room for new projects in specific priority areas
- Provide certainty for long term projects
- Encourage BPA support for multi-year contracts
- Science/Policy forums prior to project reviews

The Council staff is looking for feedback and input from the fish and wildlife coordinators in structuring future project reviews. The group discussed the impressions and conclusions from the past 8 years from the Accords and financial crises – long term funding commitments, programmatic approach to project implementation, portfolio management and flexibility and financial disparities between Accord parties and non-accord parties.

BPA is moving to no-budget, 5-year contracts, but due to 2-year Rate Case terms they can only commit to one or two year budgets for projects.

Habitat M&E - Results from the meeting with regional partners about habitat M&E (ISEMP/CHAMP) will be shared at Council meeting in July. Those projects will be reviewed once a Program habitat monitoring framework is established.

Comments: (related to project review “process relief”)

- Sponsor have to educate the new ISRP members with the same questions each time.
- Long-term projects should be reviewed differently than newer ones.
- Projects with no scope change should not have to be reviewed.

### **Agenda Item 3: Cost Savings Workgroup Update**

Tony Grover and Lynn Palensky (Council)

Staff provided a recommendation to the Fish and Wildlife Committee to fund additional sturgeon work with cost savings identified by the workgroup. The three sturgeon projects total about \$300,000 in funding for FY 2018 and 2019 and would be implemented by WDFW, ODFW and CRITFC/YN. Staff will seek final approval from the Council at the June Council meeting. The projects are modifications to existing sturgeon projects that arose from a solicitation to spend the cost savings identified by the Cost Savings Workgroup. Approximately \$650,000 was identified for reallocation for this year. Tony Grover and Bryan Mercier think there will be \$1.6M in bandwidth for next year. CRITFC plans to develop a method for quickly determining sex of white sturgeon through their Accord funds.

Some of the northern pike removal program in Lake Roosevelt has been funded from cost savings. There has been a 30 fold increase in one year with large adult northern pike. The Spokane Tribe is developing a proposal to address predator control of this species. Bonneville

and the Council expect to see another funding request to address this rapid increase in northern pike before it gets too out of hand.

Additional savings have been applied to one time hatchery investments for non-routine maintenance. It has been difficult to expend all the cost savings due to planning and design requirements at the hatcheries. Also, much of the one-time hatchery improvements have been funded through the Accords.

Council staff are talking to the lamprey work group folks about possible funding of additional lamprey actions this year. Cold water refuges is another area the Council might consider for a future solicitation after staff work is complete to narrow the scope of what that might look like.

Cost Savings Methodology – Council staff is looking back at the history of the workgroup for how it has implemented the cost savings methodology from July 2015. Concern was expressed by many that funding is being returned to BPA’s general fund this year and that was not the intent of the Cost Savings Workgroup. Staff will produce a re-draft of the cost savings methodology later this summer.

BPA’s financial situation is slightly better in last month, however, they are waiting to see how we end the year. Starting in FY18, BPA will raise their rates so some financial pressure on the Program should ease, however, the current energy markets are the new normal and BPA is adjusting their revenue structure. The F&W Program funding is now directly linked to volatility in energy market (cost of gas, wind, solar) so cost management is here to stay. Brian Mercier confirmed that BPA has slowed down contracting in order to prevent opening their Cost Recovery Adjustment Clause (CRAC) for a mid-term rate increase.

#### **Agenda Item 4: NOAA Life Cycle Modelling**

Tony Grover (Council)

Last week, NOAA presented the status of their Adaptive Management Implementation Plan (AMIP) Life Cycle Modeling to the ISAB in response to the 2013 ISAB review of life cycle models. NOAA has written a report that will be submitted to the ISAB and they briefly summarized the 20 chapters of the report. Lots of Council staff listened in to the all-day meeting. The ISAB will comment on the project in June and meet with modelers again over the summer. The final report will be due in September 2017. Information is available on Council website.

#### **Agenda Item 5: F&W Program Amendment**

Patty O’Toole (Council)

The next Council Power Plan will be developed in 2021, therefore, the next F&W Program amendment process needs to occur prior to that. Staff estimates that a completed amendment will be needed by the third quarter (August) of 2020. The call for recommendations will

conclude one year prior to that, so a call for Program amendments should occur around the spring of 2019. Staff is contemplating what work will need to occur prior to the call for recommendations so the process is focused and efficient. Staff will be developing program implementation assessments of all 21 Program strategies to support evaluation of what is working and what is not. An example of an assessment for Wildlife is in tomorrow's Council meeting packet. Objectives are an example of what the Council staff anticipates adopting in the next Program. Tony believes that the outcomes from the NOAA MAFAC task force effort to develop biological objectives will significantly support developing biological objectives for the Program.

Comments:

- Tribes aren't always supportive of numerical objectives.
- When will we shift the 70:15:15 percentage of the program to reflect the blocked areas as "anadromous"?
- Are there particular program areas that we should be focusing on ahead of the next amendment process?
- Need to consider the CRSO EIS in the mix. There is an upcoming meeting in Spokane in July.

#### **Agenda Item 6: Update on regional conversations on habitat monitoring**

Tony Grover (Council)

Council staff have met with 31 different groups and individuals to discuss CHAMP and ISMEP. They will compile comments and present a summary to the F&W Committee in June in Corvallis, OR. They expect to develop a set of recommendations for the F&W Committee in July and move those recommendations to full council in August. The expectation is that the recommendations are going to be complicated but begin to address a framework for evaluating habitat action effectiveness and assessing the benefits of habitat actions.

#### **Agenda Item 7: Open Discussion**

Jennifer Anders and Lynn Palensky (Council)

Lynn provided the following comments:

- 1) Following today's discussion, it sounds like the group is suggesting smaller workgroups to work through Program issues that continue to arise, reminiscent of the former CBFWA workgroups, but the states and tribes will need to organically create these groups. Council staff is here to help and support.
- 2) Thinking about portfolio management, it's easier for accord parties to think about that concept but what do non-accord sponsors think about that?
  - Positive: Accords or funding agreements allow for flexibility for project/contract management, reporting, contracting, implementation adjustments based on need and adaptive management, certainty for staff and full implementation.

- Negative: Difficult to lobby for portfolio management if all your projects are already cut to the bone and there is nowhere to move money from.
- Neutral: Acknowledge “core program” areas

3) A Columbia River cross-boundary sturgeon meeting will occur next winter somewhere upriver, likely in Spokane. Input and guidance for that meeting is welcome. Contact Lynn.

**Next Meeting:**

The next Regional Coordination Forum meeting will occur on Monday September 11, 2017 in Spokane, WA preceding the regularly scheduled Council meeting, and possibly Wednesday afternoon to focus on an in depth topic such as ISRP review of projects.